## REMARKS

The Office Action, dated November 4, 2003, rejected claims 1-28 under a combination of 35 U.S.C. §102, as being anticipated, by Dreke et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,463,471), and 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable in view of Dreke and Bell (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0198952).

By this paper claims 1-10, 12, 15, 19, 23, 27-28 have been amended.[1] Claims 1-28 remain pending. Of these claims, the only independent claims at issue are claims 1, 10, 19 and 27. As reflected above, in the listing of claims, claims 1, 10, and 19 are generally directed to methods for updating and reflecting user presence information in an environment where a user sends electronic messages from and/or receives electronic messages at multiple computer systems. Claim 27 directed to a corresponding computer-program product for implementing the method recited in claim 10. Each of the foregoing independent claims have been amended to more clearly recite how the appropriate presence information for a user is reflected to remote subscribers, even when some of the user's multiple computer systems actually reflect different or contradictory user presence information.

It should be appreciated that the evaluation of presence information referred to in the claims is distinguished from merely storing presence information provided by a client, as described in Dreke. In particular, Dreke discloses a system that enables peers that are of interest to one another to exchange network address information, through a central server, such that the peers can communicate directly. (Col. 4, ll. 2-7). Dreke fails, however, to disclose or even mention a one-to-many relationship in which a single user (e.g., peer) uses multiple clients or in which the user may be associated with different or contradictory status information that is detected at a plurality of different client systems. Conversely, embodiments in Dreke actually "assume" a one-to-one relationship between peers and clients. (Col. 3, ll. 53-55).

Also noticeably absent from the Dreke disclosure is any reference to a server (e.g., Dreke's Internet Presence Information Server) evaluating presence information from multiple clients to determine the status of a peer. As previously mentioned, Dreke fails to consider that a

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[1] Although the prior art status of Dreke and Bell is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the purported prior art status of Dreke and Bell at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments made herein with regard to Dreke and Bell are only made assuming, *arguendo*, that Dreke and Bell are actual prior art references and should not, therefore, be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited references.

peer can even use multiple clients. On the other hand, peers "ping" one another for presence information and/or notify other peers directly when presence information changes. (Col. 4, ll. 42-48). It is this particular type of communication described in Dreke, however, that can result in the problems described in the Applicants' background material (Page 4, ll. 3-9).

With regard to dependent claims 9, 15, 23 and 28, the office action further suggests that it would be obvious to modify Dreke's system in view of Bell to prioritize presence information. Applicants respectfully disagree. As indicated in the Office Action, the teachings of Bell are directed to changes in computer system status. (Office Action, Page 10, paragraph 3). That is, when a computer system changes status, the computer system can indicate the change to other computer systems (Bell, paragraph [0039]). Alternately, depending on computer system configuration, a computer system may be invisible to other computer systems. However, Bell is generally directed to an automated system for gaining network connectivity and Bell fails to disclose or even suggest any compatibility with user presence information.

Applicants further note that the term "master status" as recited in Bell is indicative of a particular computer having the status of a master computer that manages network communications. Accordingly, the term "master status, as recited in Bell merely suggests one computer operates as a master computer, while other computers operate as slave computers to the master (paragraphs [0039] and [0040].) Bell fails in anyway to suggest that a master status, as recited in the claims, is created to reflect user presence information.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Dreke and Bell fail to anticipate or obviate the recited claims, either singly or in combination. In particular, Dreke and Bell fail to disclose the claimed updating and reflecting of a master status for a user, wherein a server maintains multiple view statuses for a user corresponding to multiple clients, receives a status update from a client, evaluates statuses from the multiple view statuses to determine the master status of the user, and updates or stores the master status in a master view that can be reflected to subscribers, as recited in the claims. For at least the forgoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, 1-28 are now in condition for allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 4th day of February 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

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